(b) whether new garment exporters are given encouragement by way of allotment of quota; and

(c) the basis of allotment of quota by Apparel Export Promotion Council for manufacturing exports?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA): (a) to (c) New entrepreneurs are eligible for allotment of garment quotas under the Frist Come First Served System as per with the existing exporters. Also if an exporter invests a minimum of Rs. 50 lakhs in new machinery from an approved list of machinery) either in an existing unit or in a new unit during a period of 12 consecutive months commencing not earlier than the first of January of the base year, he is entitled to avail himself of garment quotas under the New Investors Entitlement (NIE) System. NIE allotments are made only once for a particular block of investments. NIE allotments are made in the ratio of 1000 pieces of quotas for every one lakh rupees of investment in machinery made during the reference period. The NIE allotments are made by the Apparel Export Promotion Council, in accordance with the provisions of the Garment Exports Entitlement Policy of the Government.

Demand for Price Hike by the Cottion Growers

2790. DR. JAGANNATH MISHRA: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the cotton growers in Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan have demanded an immadiate hike in prices to at least Rs. 3000/- per quintal for Narma Variety and Rs. 2500/- for Deshi Cotton; and

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Minimum Support Prices are fixed after taking into consideration all relavant factors. The market prices of cotton are roling well above the Minimum Support Prices (MSP) announced by the Government. Change in the MSP for Cotton is not being contemplated.

Alternative Highway Between Jammu and Srinagar

2791. SHRI BHARAHAN MAJHI: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a proposal to construct an alternative highway between Jammu and Srinagar;

(b) if so, the estimated cost of the project;

(c) the expected date of the commencement of the construction of that Highway; and

(d) the steps taken in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN): (a) to (d) The construction of an alternative highway named Mughal Road project has been accepted in principle. The proposal is in conceptual stage and therefore it is too early to give any detials.

Delay in Filling of Posts Reserved for OBC in the Ministry of External Affairs

2792. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that candidates sponsored by the Employment Exchange for Group "D" posts (peon) in the reserved category of OBC in the Ministry of External Affairs in its Akabar Bhavan, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi Office have been awaiting their interviews/selections since long;

(b) whether it is also a fact that according to the latest Government policy, all such reserved vacancies must be filled up within the stipulated time; and

(c) if so, by when all selection formalities are likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJARAL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The selection formalities have already been completed within the stipulated time. The offers of appointment to selected candidates are under issue.

Indo-Nepal Cooperation in River Navigation

2793. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of India and Nepal have taken a decision to establish co-operation on navigation aspects of river systems of both the countries;

(b) whether Government have any proposal to set up a joint committee to look into these aspects; and

(c) if so, the steps taken by Government in that direction?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA): (a) to (c) Government of India and His Majesty's Government of Nepal have recently agreed to constitute a Joint Study Team to study the possiblity of navigation in the Kosi, Gandak and Karnali rivers flowing from Nepal to India.

Export of Cotton Under Open General Licence System

2794. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state whether Government propose to make the necessary changes in the law to export cotton under Open General Licence?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA): No change in the policy for export of cotton is under consideration, at present.

भोपाल स्थित पारपत्र कार्यालय में लम्बित आवेदन

2795. **श्री अजीत जोगी:** क्या **विदेश** मंत्री 4 दिसम्बर, 1996 को राज्य में अतारांकित प्रश्न 1288 के दिए गए उत्तर को देखेंगे और यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) भोपाल स्थित क्षेत्रीय पारपत्र कार्यालय में पारपत्रों के लिए आवेदन पत्रों के लम्बित रहने के क्या कारण हैं और इन आवेदन पत्रों पर पारपत्र जारी करने के लिए क्या कदम उठाए गए हैं/उठाए जा रहे हैं;

(ख) क्या इस कार्यालय में कर्मचारियों की कमी है; और

(ग) यदि हां, तो तत्संबंधी बयौरा क्या है और इस संबंध में क्या कदम उठाए जा रहे हैं?

विदेश मंत्री (श्री इन्द्र कुमार गुजराल): (क) 29.11.96 की स्थिति के अनुसार भोपाल स्थिति पासपोर्ट कार्यालय में 2732 पासपोर्ट आवेदन लम्बित पड़े थे जिनमें से 1486 आवेदन एक महीने से अधिक समय से लम्बित थे। ये आवेदन मुख्यतः आवेदकों से सूचना/दस्तावेज प्राप्त न होने और पुलिस प्राधिकारियों से अपूर्ण रिपोर्टें प्राप्त होने की वजह से लम्बित पड़े थे। आवेदकों/संबंधित प्राधिकारियों को अंतिम रूप से अनुस्मारक जारी करके इन मामलों की समीक्षा की जाएगी।

(ख) और (ग) जी हां, भोपाल स्थित पासपोर्ट कार्यालय में दो अवर श्रेणी लिपिकों की कमी है। एक पद को भरे जाने के लिए कर्मचारी चयन आयोग से अनुरोध किया गया है। दूसरा पद स्थानान्तरण के जरिए भरा जा रहा है। फिलहाल बकाया आवेदनों को निपटाने के लिए दो नैमित्तिक कर्मचारियों के पद संस्वीकृत किए गए हैं।

Export of Manmade Fibre

2796. SHRIMATI ANANDIBEN JETHABHAI PATEL: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it has been brought to the notice of Government that export of manmade fibre from Surat, (Gujarat) has declined from 33.5% in the year 1994-95 to 19.2% in 1995-96;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;